2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42



593 578 angrily to him, she will meet him with abuse: Pour out yourself and gulp it down, did she not give you any? He may be thirsty. She will abuse and scold him, until she makes him angry. Now men cannot take it up with women as regards the mouth; therefore he becomes furious and thrashes her, so that she lies there done for. The woman will howl and abuse him foully: That woman you have, stab your woman! Bring her, let her cook, gnash it both of you, heaps of it; your stomach, is it not expanding? You blind fool, you staring wretch, die like a beast; did you not see me then? Your burst eyes! Were they in your neck? I will not stay here; do you imagine you are the only man existing? And the children howl uproariously; they run out and cry: Come here, Father, come here, Father, he is killing our mother. The village people then come and warn the two; and if such happens often, they fine them after having found out what the fault is. Some women are very lazy and squander everything. Some men also are very bad-tempered; without any reason they beat their wives; they find fault with the food and the work, when it is good; all day long they scowl at their wives, and they speak only roughly and harshly to them. And some men squander everything by beer-drinking. When the man or the [627] [586] woman, or both of them, continue bad in this way they separate, that is to say, some people do; but some people will not separate, because they feel pity for the children. Such people live in great trouble.

h. The sorrows and joys of father, mother, and children.

593 861 Parents will not beat their children wantonly, if they do not become angry; and they will rather themselves not take food, but, if there is any food, they will give it to the children. In the presence of the mother the father is unable to beat the children; their mother will protect them. And there is very little done in the way of punishing children; therefore they live as they like. If they do not obey when they have been ordered to do something once or twice, the parents will leave them alone and be done with it. And if they are beaten or the like, the children will run away sulky to relatives. These will not upbraid them and send them home; they let them stay; thereby the children get courage. The parents are forced to go to fetch them, and only by coaxing them are they able to bring them home. Also when grown up, the children will commit faults without fear, because they themselves are not punished; the parents are punished. The Santals have much trouble with their children, because the children are not kept in discipline. So long as they are small or live in the houses of their parents, children will not get what they deserve for their bad behaviour; but in their time they will get full retribution for not having respected their parents. Sometimes when they have become utterly worried, the parents will say to their misbehaving children: You young fellow, or you young girl, when we both are no more, you will not get enough water even to clean yourself, and you will be carried away like a whirlwind.

31 Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
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*Conclusion*

614 [27] In concluding the review of the Santal clans and sub-clans as investigated by us in Mayurbhánj, we should note that quite a number of Santal sub-clans have been unearthed by Dr. Campbell, and we have taken the liberty to incorporate his list in the Appendix along with those of Risley, as found in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. An elaborate discussion of these sub-clans may form the work of a lifetime and we trust earnest students will take up this exploration.

Secondly, it may be generally observed that the sub-clans of the parent clan can marry into the other sub-clans, provided they have not the same totem. Thus a Nij-Tuḍu can marry a Lat' Tuḍu, unless of course there are other local bars, of which sometimes there is no end. It goes without saying that marriage outside the clan proper is the most welcome, but regard must be had to some traditional enmities as between the Besras and the Tuḍus, Kiskus vs. Màṛṇḍis, and Santalia is replete with tales and legends of lads and lasses of such Capulets and Montagues creating a zig-saw puzzle for their parents and the clans in general.

614 688 627 Thirdly, offences against the food-taboos of the clans and sub-clans are tried by the members constituting it. Thus if a Nij-Hansdak' eats a Raj-hans, their totem, there is bound to be a gathering of all

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
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Nij-Hansdak's along with a Ṭikà Murmu, (the Santal equivalent for a Brahmin for such purposes), for ceremonial expiation of the erring soul. It is on payment of Rs. 1-4as., a cup of bell-metal and a napkin (to be received by the Ṭikà Murmu) that he can be restored to his clan. 614 688 627

Fourthly, we should note that Santals, although divided into so many clans and sub-clans, do not observe any caste-system as the Hindus. Although the *Murmus* are called *Ṭhàkurs* and are generally selected as priests of the tribe (in preference to others), they dine with any one within the tribal fold and marry anywhere within the permitted grades. But it is not the custom of the Santal to take rice or water from the *Dekos* (non-Santals). Although in course of time, some clans claim some superiority over others, no rigours of castes are noticeable. But as we have observed before, the same does not hold good with regard to non-Santals. Santal boys and girls, after their marriage, are prohibited by strict regulation from dining with the Dekos excepting the Kuṛmbis, Hos and Bhumij. Thus they maintain, by means of a rigorous taboo, their purity from defilement. 614 564 [793] [784]

In conclusion, we should note that we questioned the Santals of the Santal Paraganas regarding marriage within the clan (viz. including all the various sub-clans). The educated Santals said that 614

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42



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*Katha*, the Witches are the thorns of the Santal social-fabric. They cause unhappiness among relatives leading not unoften to separation and murders. Questioned about Witch-craft a Santal would say, "Magistrates undoubtedly try cases, but the ideas of Witch-craft do not enter their heads. If we punish Witches, they complain against us and we get the sentence ourselves. The problem is very difficult. And when we explain to the *Hakim* (magistrate), he argues thus, "If the woman over there is really a Witch, let her eat my fingers. Then I shall believe your statement." But the trouble is that the witches do not kill men with such weapons as swords, but by the exercise of a certain hypnotic spell. But, they would argue, it was otherwise in ancient times when the Headman and his assistants used to chastise the witches and drive them out of the Santal villages. But now, they get full indulgence from Magistrates and the Witches are not punished as they deserve".

[627] [178]

*How do the Witches exercise their spell*

The Witches, according to the sayings of the patriarchs, masquerade in the guise of women at day-time. At night-fall, they leave the beds of their husbands and put broom-sticks in their places. Thus they exercise a spell on their husbands and relatives into believing that they are sleeping. Then

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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Manjhi Haram's (headman) house. On it taxes are collected by the Manjhi Haram and legal disputes are settled. There is no fixed size for the Majhisthan. It is found that the Santals, in different villages make Majhisthans of different dimensions. In a village there was a Majhisthan ten feet long, eight feet broad and two and half feet in height while in another was one five feet long, four feet broad and one foot high. It consists of a raised mud mound over which a neatly thatched roof is constructed. The roof is supported by five upright wooden posts in the four corners of the Majhisthan and one in the centre. At the base of the centre post is stuck a small stone or wooden lump (sometimes shaped as a human head) daubed with vermilion. From the roof an earthen pot is suspended containing water brought from the Jahirsthan for the spirits to drink and beside it hangs a peacock's head. The floor of the Majhisthan is plastered with mud and cowdung.

**The Jahirsthan (Sacred Grove):** The Jahirsthan is a place where religious ceremonies of the village are performed by the Santals. It is situated at the end of the village and it must be within the boundary of the village. A cluster of sal trees about twenty to twenty-five in number is always required. Among these trees three are essential, and at the foot of each of these three trees a stone is put representing the deities, Jaherera, Turukomonrako, Marang-Buru. The fourth one is an Ashan tree which grows near these three sal trees and at the foot of this tree a stone representing the deity Pargana-bonga is kept. The fifth and the last one is a Mowa tree, which stands a little apart, and at the foot of this tree, a stone is placed to represent

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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583 584 ship period is regarded as the happiest time for both. They meet regularly at some selected place outside the village in a jungle or meadow. Their movements are always kept secret. Gradually the relatives of both the parties come to know what is going on between their son and daughter. They find that the boy and the girl do not return home sometimes for days and nights together. So they have to consider consequences of such courtship between the two and even send men on all directions for them. When it is found out what has been going on between the boy and the girl a Panchayat is called. In this Panchayat the presence of the parents of both the parties along with the headman of the two villages is necessary. Further five important persons of the village are invited. The girl's parents ask the boy why he has eloped with their daughter. The boy's parents in their turn ask the girl why she has consented to go with their boy. Then the boy and the girl have to disclose the whole thing about their courtship before the Panchayat and the two village headmen condemn them for their misbehaviour. They tell them that if they want to live together they have to marry otherwise they will not allow them to live together or to meet each other. If they are agreed to this proposal of marriage all the people present in the assembly immediately and make the necessary arrangements for their marriage. In such cases the marriage ceremony is not so elaborate as in the Raebar bapla. Only in the presence of the two village headmen and all the other important people of the Panchayat does the sindradan ceremony takes place.

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597 of the boy renounce him and declare him henceforth to belong to the new father; it is also declared that the boy shall have no right of inheritance in the property of his natural father. When all this has been done the adopting father fixes a date for the formal adoption of the boy. The villagers of that village on that day behave as at Janam Chhatiar (name-giving ceremony of the Santal child). They shave and drink handi (rice beer). The usual procedure in a Janam Chhatiar is that the officiating midwife tells the assembled people the name of the new-born child; here she does not tell the name of the boy but the sept or sub-sept of the adopting father; henceforth that becomes the sept of the boy. Thereupon they leave the boy to eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to the tribal deities. Henceforward the boy becomes their own.

[802] [273] [614] [782]

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627 **Bitlaha**: It means to outcast a Santal from society. This outcasting takes place by the order of the assembled members of the Panchayat. It is resorted to when a Santal woman indulges in sexual intercourse with either a diku (non-Santal) or with a person of the same sept. If any one commits such an offence the headman of the village in question calls his neighbouring colleagues together and informs them of the matter; if the people hold that the case is not proven, then those who started the rumour are severely punished. If it is proved, the assembly gives an order for outcasting and they proceed to carry it out the day after the annual hunt. The date of this Bitlaha is announced by a man in the market who carries a branch of a Sal tree (Shorea robusta) with leaves. The people in the market on seeing him understand the matter and count the leaves

[622] [689] [211] [824]

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of the branch (each leaf of the branch means a day) because as many leaves as it contains so many days afterwards this bitlaha is to take place. During this operation the Parganait of that bunglow and even the Sub-divisional officer of that district are generally commissioned to superintend so that nothing untoward happens. One such outcasting I saw personally about two years ago at Dumka within the Santal Pargana.

In the early morning of the appointed day the bachelors and other male members of the neighbouring villages with flutes, drums, bows and arrows meet at the end of the village street where the culprit lives. The bachelors compose extempore obscene songs in which he is mentioned by name. Drumming is kept up so terribly that the sound can be heard for miles around. At a sign from the leader the crowd with wild yells and lifted hands holding bows rushes towards the village, drumming and blowing their flutes loudly and singing obscene songs. The women of that village do not remain there; they go away to some other place to keep their prestige.

When the crowd reaches the house of the offender they tie a short charred bit of firewood, a worn-out broom and some used leaf-plates on a long pole of bamboo and fix it at the entrance to the courtyard. Within the courtyard they break the fireplace and all things and even sometimes break the house. Young men in undress desecrate the rooms.

The persons outcasted are not allowed to take food with others, they cannot give their children in marriage within the Santal community. The parents of both sides also would be outcasted, and those who give shelter to these outcasts will be treated like-wise.

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All petty disputes, both of a civil and criminal nature, are settled there but if the matter to be settled is of an immoral and shameful character, they go to the end of the village street or on some other convenient place where they need not fear to hurt the feelings of their womenkind.

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**Inheritance**: In the matter of inheritance, the Santals follow their own customs and know nothing of the so-called codes which govern the devolution of property among the Hindus. Till the death of the father the property of the family remains intact and all the members enjoy in common. After his death the property is divided among his sons equally except that the eldest gets a bullock and a rupee more than the others. As the Santal women have no right to any of the property, movable and immovable, the question of inheritance on their part cannot arise at all. If a man dies without an issue his property goes to the nearest relation. If the father of the deceased remains alive the property will revert to the father; if he is dead it goes to the brothers of the deceased equally; if the latter are dead their sons succeed. In default of this the paternal uncles and their sons become successors. The condition of the widow of a childless man becomes very bad; none takes her charge. Sometimes she gets one cloth, a bati (brass vessel), a calf and 10 to 12 maunds of paddy. Sometimes also it can be seen that her husband's younger brothers keep her. Even when one of the younger brothers keeps her, the share of the deceased brother is equally divided between all the brothers. If the younger brothers of her husband do not give her any shelter she returns to her parents'

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St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42



622 [796] [174] man, together with that of all the other officials, was renewed annually, but there is little reality in it at the present day and the post is held for life. He is the spokesman of the villagers in all matters affecting their temporal welfare. In the original 622 174 423 427 settlements it was usual for two or three brothers to start the new village together. The eldest brother assumed the leading position, and all the lands cleared or claimed for the future were in his gift. The cultivable land was divided equally after some portions had been reserved for the officials in recognition of the services they would be called on to perform for the benefit of the community, and the headman received the biggest share of the reserved land. As the village grew, others came to settle. Some became the tenants of the headman, fleeing from the oppression of landlords elsewhere. Others came into the village by marrying daughters of the first settlers. So it comes about that the family of the headman is the most substantial in the village. During the course of years, however, even the headman has in the majority of cases lost his original rights to a non-Santal landlord and has himself become an under-tenant, in spite of which his family has maintained its favourable position in relation to the rest of the villagers. In some cases he has also been able to acquire the rights of other tenants who have defaulted for one reason or another in paying rent.

622 [434] [689] [224] [585] In addition to land, the headman receives other payments which he can use for his own benefit. Thus, when an offender against tribal custom is fined the headman receives a fourth of the total amount. During the spring hunts he receives a part of the flesh of every animal slain by a man from his own village. During the marriage ceremonies he occupies an important position throughout, and when a new bride is coming to his village her father has to pay a rupee to him before the party sets out from her home. At all times he is treated with [554] great respect, especially by the younger members of the community. A marriage party always pays its respects first at his house, and at festivals, when the young men go dancing through the village street, they start outside the headman's house.

In all matters involving the members of more than one village he is the acknowledged representative of his own people, whether it be the making of arrangements for a marriage or the [627] fixing of dates for festivals and for hunts. In the settling of disputes he acquires considerable experience, being the chairman of [623] the council in his own village and meeting with the headmen of [554] other villages when the hunt council sits. Enjoying a position